

WELSH GOVERNMENT INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Title of proposal:	Changes to the target setting requirements on school governing bodies
Official(s) completing the Integrated Impact Assessment (name(s) and name of team):	Paul Moyle, School Information & Improvement Branch
Department:	Education and Public Services
Head of Division/SRO (name):	Steve Vincent
Cabinet Secretary/Minister responsible:	Kirsty Williams, Minister for Education
Start Date:	29 August 2018

SECTION 1. WHAT ACTION IS THE WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSIDERING AND WHY?

In narrative form, please describe the issue and the action proposed by the Welsh Government. How have you applied / will you apply the five ways of working in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to the proposed action, throughout the policy and delivery cycle?

1. Working with the teaching profession, local government, regional consortia, Estyn, unions and international experts, the Welsh Government has been undertaking a fundamental review of the current accountability system. The place of target setting requirements and the extent to which they are managed and/or legislated by the Welsh Government within the future Evaluation and Improvement arrangements is part of the wider discussions and reform development that is ongoing. It is our intention that these arrangements will be tested and in place ready for the new curriculum. In the meantime, the current target setting requirements do not align with imminent transitional performance reporting arrangements in schools.
2. Our National Mission sets out our vision for an education accountability system that is fair, coherent, proportionate, transparent, and based on our shared values for Welsh education. To achieve this, we must ensure a coherent approach that avoids unintended consequences and contributes towards the raising of standards in every classroom and for all our learners. Raising standards, reducing the attainment gap and ensuring a system that enjoys public confidence and is a source of national pride is at the heart of our action plan.
3. As part of our action plan, we agreed transitional evaluation arrangements with schools in order to support deeper collaborations between schools and secure the raising of standards for all learners. To support these transitional arrangements, we have already made a number of changes:
4. We have consulted on amendments to, and subsequently amended a series of regulations, to stop the routine publication of Teacher Assessment data and National and Numeracy Tests data at a school, local authority and regional level - this is helping to ensure that schools can now focus on assessment of the pupil, rather than using data as part of a high stakes accountability system. Regulations amended included the *School Performance and Absence Targets (Wales) Regulations 2011* ("Target Setting Regulations").
5. We are now consulting on further changes to the Target Setting Regulations in order to reflect interim changes to Key Stage 4 performance measures announced by the Minister for Education in May 2018. This suite of interim Key Stage 4 performance measures for secondary schools have been co-developed with the education sector

and place a greater focus on raising our aspirations for all learners. They will replace the 2018 suite of Key Stage 4 performance measures, including the Level 2, Level 2 inclusive¹ and Level 1 threshold measures, from 2019 (i.e. the results for pupils reaching the end of year 11 in summer 2019).

6. As mentioned above, the current School Target Setting Regulations do not align with the new interim measures (those Regulations refer specifically to existing Key Stage 4 measures that will soon become obsolete). This no longer makes sense as such targets would no longer be realistic or measureable and therefore would not support effective self-evaluation and improvement. A more immediate change is therefore needed for the interim period, prior to the implementation of the new Evaluation and Improvement arrangements, and any necessary revisions to statutory target setting requirements. This will require amendments to Target Setting Regulations.
7. The current target setting requirements are very specific in nature, placing a disproportionate emphasis on the achievement of quantitative performance measures. This can limit the school's ability to set genuine targets focused on the real priorities for improvement in their own individual context. Additionally, feedback from the sector points to a need for greater autonomy for schools. For these reasons, it would similarly not be appropriate to simply replace the current specific targets for year 11 pupils at Key Stage 4 with equally specific requirements relating to the interim performance measures, particularly given their interim nature.
8. In order to address the above issues in the interim, the Welsh Government proposes new regulations to amend the existing target setting requirements for pupils in year 11 at Key Stage 4. The proposal is to remove the requirement for school governing bodies to set performance measure-specific targets and instead increase the required number of non-specified targets that school governing bodies are already required to set based on school self-evaluation.
9. In practice, this means school governing bodies would no longer have to set targets, or publish information, in relation to the following prescribed achievements:
 - Percentage of pupils to achieve the Level 1 threshold
 - Percentage of pupils to achieve the Level 2 threshold including an approved relevant qualification in English or Welsh first language and Mathematics ("Level 2 inclusive")

¹ The Level 2 inclusive is the Level 2 threshold including an approved relevant qualification in English or Welsh first language and Mathematics

10. School governing bodies would need to set additional non-specified targets based on an evaluation of the performance of pupils at the school in relation to the previous school year. The regulations already require school governing bodies to set three targets in this way and this proposal would increase that requirement to six targets with additional flexibility for targets to be based on wider school self-evaluation, not solely limited to an evaluation of teacher assessments.
11. These proposals will remove an unreasonable duty on school governing bodies to set targets against measures that will no longer be in use. In doing so, we are moving to a less-prescriptive and more flexible target setting system, encouraging schools to set targets based on self-evaluation and focused on the real priorities for improvement in the school's individual context.
12. It is intended that this improved system of target setting, together with actions that stem from it, should lead to raised educational standards and improved outcomes for learners. In this way the proposals contribute to the Ambitious and Learning key theme through supporting young people to make the most of their potential.
13. This policy will have a direct contribution to some of the goals set out within *The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*, primarily *a prosperous Wales*. In developing these proposals, we have taken a collaborative approach through engagement with Local Authorities and regional Consortia.
14. Schools are already experienced in setting targets in this way. Without the proposed amendments, schools would continue to be statutorily required to set targets against obsolete performance measures, which may be unrealistic and difficult to measure in the longer term, thereby wasting time and resources for all parties involved.

SECTION 7. CONCLUSION

7.1 How have people most likely to be affected by the proposal been involved in developing it?

15. The primary purpose of these interim proposals is to address the current misalignment between the existing statutory target setting requirements and the interim Key Stage 4 performance measures to be reported from 2019 that would otherwise result in unreasonable requirements for school governing bodies.

16. In developing the proposed changes, we have taken into account feedback from schools who have expressed concerns with ongoing requirements to set targets against what will become obsolete school performance measures. Wider feedback has also indicated an appetite for greater flexibility and greater autonomy for schools to manage their own journeys.

17. We have also worked collaboratively with Local Authorities and consortia on the interim proposals and plans for managing target setting requirements for this academic year as we transition from the old to interim performance measures at Key Stage 4.

18. A consultation with a range of stakeholders will be undertaken in relation to the proposal and the relevant impact assessments updated as the proposals develop further. The consultation will also be included in the Dysg newsletter and published on the Welsh Government website.

7.2 What are the most significant impacts, positive and negative?

19. The proposals have been identified as primarily impacting upon school governing bodies, headteachers, practitioners, Local Authorities, consortia and learners.

20. As a key driver of the changes, positive impacts have been identified through the removal of an unreasonable requirement to set targets against the achievement of obsolete school performance measures, thereby preventing otherwise wasted resources for school governing bodies and those involved in target setting process.

21. Initially, in the short term, the changes are predicted to have a minimal negative impact due to the potential costs associated with the time required for teachers, headteachers and other school practitioners to become familiarised with the new regulations and revised requirements. This cost is expected to be minimal due to the simple nature and minor extent of these interim changes.

22. Conversely, the proposal will provide greater flexibility to schools, enabling targets focussed on the real priorities for improvement in the school's individual context. In this way the proposal is expected to have a moderate positive impact on school governing bodies, headteachers, teachers and practitioners through greater flexibility to self-improve and manage their own journeys.

23. Schools are already experienced in setting non-specified targets in this way (they are already required to set three non-specified targets under the regulations) and the proposals simply increases the number and expands the flexibility on what information the targets must be based on. In contrast, without the proposed amendments, schools would continue to be statutorily required to set targets against obsolete performance measures, which are unrealistic and more difficult to measure, thereby wasting time and resources as mentioned further above. This has been identified a positive impact.

24. Positive impacts have also been identified to children and young people as targets should be better focused on providing a constructive contribution to learners' learning. These improved targets, together with the actions taken to meet them, is expected to have a moderate positive impact on children and young people through raised educational standards and improved outcomes for learners. Impacts on Children's rights have been considered in a separate Children's Rights Impact Assessment and the proposals are concluded to support UNCRC rights, particularly: Article 28 – Right to education and Article 29 – Goals of education.

25. The proposal will not impact specific groups of people or communities in a disparate way, rather targets should become more inclusive through removal of the focus on threshold performance measures. Feedback from schools is that the current threshold measures are not inclusive and do not take account of the individual learner.

26. As a result of improved outcomes for learners, this should lead to greater opportunities for further education, access to better jobs and, therefore, better candidates for businesses. In this way, the proposal has been assessed as having a minor long term impact on businesses and the economy.

27. It has also been identified that the potential wider variation of targets could lead to short term social costs to local authorities, consortia and Elected Members. Aside from appropriate updates to systems, this is due to a reduced ability to aggregate school level targets for reporting at a Local Authority or regional level with scrutiny committees and portfolio holders holding providers to account. However, this existing behaviour is an additional source of pressure on providers that can prevent the most appropriate curriculum being offered to learners whilst excessive focus is on performance measure outputs. Therefore, in encouraging the move away from this practice, the proposal is expected to result in a moderate long-term benefit resulting in positive effects for schools.

28. No negative impacts have been identified on rural individuals or communities, health, privacy, cultural wellbeing, the Welsh language, third sector, justice or the environment.

7.3 In light of the impacts identified, how will the proposal:

- **maximise contribution to our well-being objectives and the seven well-being goals; and/or,**
- **avoid, reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?**

29. It is intended that the improved system of target setting achieved through the proposal, together with actions that stem from it, should lead to raised educational standards and improved outcomes for learners. In this way the proposals contribute to the Ambitious and Learning key theme through supporting young people to make the most of their potential.

30. The proposal will have a direct contribution to some of the goals set out within *The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*, primarily a prosperous Wales. In developing these proposals, we have taken a collaborative approach through engagement with Local Authorities and regional Consortia and acting on feedback from schools.

31. Short term negative impacts on Local Authorities, regional consortia and Elected Members through the wider variation of targets, and the move away from simple aggregations of school attainment outcomes in relation to school performance at a regional level, will be managed and minimised through continued work with key stakeholders to change behaviours. The short term negative impacts are outweighed by the benefits of this approach as discussed above.

7.4 How will the impact of the proposal be monitored and evaluated as it progresses and when it concludes?

32. This is an interim proposal and the longer term role and legislative position with school target setting will be considered as part of the developing Evaluation and Improvement arrangements which are being co-constructed with a range of stakeholders. The outcome of the changes from these proposals will be considered as part of this.